

Woman's Union Missionary Society.

HOSPITAL SERIES III.

OUR LITTLE SLAVE GIRL.

ONE bright morning in Shanghai, a young girl in the depths of poverty, was brought to the Margaret Williamson Hospital, covered with rags and scars, a sorrowful pitiable spectacle. Her age was given as sixteen, but she was so diminutive that it seemed impossible not to consider her a child. In fact her name Ah Noü meant simply "a child," for no one had called her by the endearing word "Sunshine" or "Little Pearl" given often to Chinese daughters.

Some years ago, she had been purchased as a future daughter-in-law for thirty dollars! and according to Chinese custom until the marriage takes place, was considered a slave. To understand what this means, we will listen to the words of one of our Medical Missionaries.

"When a little slave comes into the family, she is the butt of the children, as well as the mistress. They lead her into mischief, and if she will not be led by them, the children beat her. Is it any wonder that her future husband, seeing her so despised and helpless, ill-treats her in his turn? The food of these daughters-in-law is of the poorest, and they sleep where they can. They must be the last ones up at night, the first ones in the

morning, and if they are useless or sick, are left on the road to beg or die, or it may be are dropped at the Hospital, with the understanding that they have just been found and belong to no one."

A woman whom Ah Noü called "Aunt" took care of her until her betrothal period had passed. Meantime the wretched child being seriously ill, came under the care of our skilful Medical Missionaries, and passed through a successful operation. As the days went by, the loving attentions she received, transformed the wan melancholy girl into a bright cheerful maiden, whose sunny face, and sweet attractive manners made her a benediction. Alas! no one came to the Hospital, to inquire for this poor slave-girl, and as the days passed into months, at last it was found that not only were all her own relatives dead, but those of the heathen man to whom she was betrothed. What was to be done?

By this time Ah Noü had become very helpful to the Matron of the Hospital, for not only was she eager to assist, but quick to render assistance, and her unbound feet enabled her to speed on many an important errand. Her tenderness to the patients, and her gentle refined ways, were a marvel to every one who knew of her ignorant surroundings, in a wretched home where no windows let in light on its bare mud floor.

At last the thought came "Why not purchase the girl for an assistant?" Many kind hearts in America quickly responded to the half expressed wish, but before arrangements could be made, friends in Shanghai presented her to the Hospital.

Every morning she found her way to our Bridgman Memorial School, to learn the important branches of an elemental

Chinese education, and the remainder of her busy day was devoted to loving service in the Hospital and Dispensary.

Soon Ah Noü became interested in the Bible class at the Hospital, and listened eagerly to the preaching of our gifted Chinese Bible woman Mrs. Tae, as she expounded new things and old, out of the word of God. Her heart longed to prove how deeply she felt the joy of becoming the Saviour's witness in her heathen land, and a happy day was it for her, and all the Hospital Missionaries, when she received the rite of baptism. A companion difficult to control, and who had often looked down upon Ah Noü, was so impressed by her consecration, that she too gave her heart to the Lord, and uttered a touching prayer for heavenly benediction.

Two days passed in helpful service, and our slave-girl evinced a steadfastness of purpose, and a strength of character, hardly to be expected in one so retiring. The wedding-day approached, and loving hearts who watched Ah Noü's development, provided gladly the gifts for personal and household use, which no Chinese bride could do without.

At last the Dispensary where the service of our little assistant had been so cheerfully rendered, became the scene of a gay bridal.

Ah Noü after the painful mysteries of a Chinese bride's toilette, appeared decked in elaborately embroidered garments, with the wedding helmet laden with imitation jewels. The indispensable red crêpe veil, modestly concealed her sweet interesting face, filled with emotion as the ceremony came to a close, and the parting followed. Tender were the farewells to the missionaries, who had made her life worth living, and genuine were

the tears Ah Nouï shed, as she crossed the threshold of the Hospital, which had been her only happy home.

An untried future awaits our little bride, a slave no longer, but she needs more than ever, the prayers of those who have loved and watched over her, that her home may be a centre of Christian influence.

And thus has one immortal soul, precious as ours in the sight of our redeemer, been rescued from slavery and taught the way of blessedness, through the widening far reaching influence of the Margaret Williamson Hospital. You who have given and worked with us, are you not rewarded? Can we not ask those who have never aided in this work, if it is not a priceless investment, to take part in a Hospital, which gave relief and solace to 21,970 patients in 1891? An endowed bed in our Hospitals, Margaret Williamson, Wells Williams and Stevens Maternity Ward, costs \$600.

Have you no friend whose memory is dear to you, whose name you would like to associate with this charity which reaches suffering bodies and sin-sick souls?

Think of this opportunity.

S. D. D.

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President, MRS. HENRY JOHNSON.

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THE MISSIONARY LINK is a monthly periodical in the interests of the Society.